SS

Dear Howard, 3/26/77

The more I think of the Kelley 2/13/77 memo and its implications the more Byzantine it appears and the more I wonder if its disclosure to you was accidental.

I have just reread the first page only. Yesterday we were having a copying machine demonstrated. We experimented some and there was an extra first page after I mailed copies out and filed the one for me.

I sent one of the copies you sent to Tom. I'd like to ask you to make two more copies, send one to Jim to replace the copy of a copy I sent him and mark one up yourself, bearing in mind the other contents of the files on this you have received and the various public representations about the meaning or alleged meaning of these records.

One can read Kelley's memo and wonder if his omissions are deliberate or from ignorance. Is "some weeks ago" for a year ago and "made a matter of public record" rather than used in a court suit from some of this stuff - a current suit at that. One cannot determine even which Attorney General from his memo. So while he is without doubt not recording all he knew, perhaps there is a question about how much more he knew and whether he then knew all we do. I'm inclined to think he then knew more but it is not certain.

The potential for anti-Kennedy use is visible. The next big digression could go this way, too. Many if not most of the critics are anti-Kennedy and there has been a successful campaign to foster the self-destruct theory of a Castro kickback. There is no other theory under which the House committee could have called Trafficante.

We also do not know what accounts for the missing of the evidence that was once part of JFK's body. There has been much on the family's sensitivity to this and I have no doubt there was this sensitivity. That, however, does not mean that it is responsible. Others had at least as much motive. By the way, was not that footlocked not in Bobby's office? Was it not in the hands of the FBI? Or did they not deliver it? Regardless of where that footlocker was it presented no problem and no real hazard to the black bag specialists. So a tracing of possession and access could be valuable at some point.

Analysis of such evasiveness as Van Cleve and the "unspecified dtae" of deposit when there are ample records of the time and the foremost expert, Rhoads, was there, as well as counsel who were involved.(Some time in the future Jim may be examining some of these people, especially Rhoads and Harding and Kelley)

From this you would never know who had possession of the contents earlier or who provided the footlocker, if the SS did, and thus could easily have had another key. And keeping such materials in no more than a footlocker?

What are "the Kennedy offices?" Bobby's or what is actually the Archive's, the Kennedy Library part, indicated by "presumably from Mrs. Lincoln?"

Is it no more than an accident that Kelley uses the singular, executor, where the letter agreement uses the plural, or more than Bobby? Especially when bracketed with Angie Novella producing the key.

If you can find the time for a careful analysis, including the raising of questions you cannot answer with certainty, it could be of value and I think it would also be a good exercise for you. Whether this is little or no more than normal bureaucratic self-protection by obfuscation may be very inpirtant, perhaps soon. Soon may also relate to my responding to a reaction, if there is one - by no means certain.

Could you also evaluate both the number of big brass and the selection of a place to confer? Why not Archives, DJ, GSA? What is Parker in this? SAC of what? If an SS expert on the subject was needed, why not Bouck? Why was Rhoads alone, esp. why was Johnson not there? Secrets from him or he to hold secrets? Etc. Best,